

because the Agency has an obligation to involve stakeholders in any Agency effort that could affect the safety and efficiency of the airspace. A full risk-assessment, including the Homeland Security implications of placing all of our radar functions in one location, must be conducted and made open to public scrutiny.

A moratorium on consolidations is necessary to provide the opportunity for Congress to evaluate the specific operational need for proposed consolidations and prevent the Agency from moving ahead with flawed consolidation plans without a defined policy.

We hope that you will support the efforts of our nation's professional air traffic control workforce in keeping our National Airspace System the safest in the world by supporting this amendment. Vote yes on Hastings-Poe-Filner-Bono.

Sincerely,

PATRICK FORREY,
President.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I reluctantly rise in opposition to the Hastings amendment, joining the chairman of the full committee, Chairman OBERSTAR; the ranking member Mr. MICA; and Mr. PETRI.

Mr. HASTINGS is exactly right. The FAA has done a very poor job of communicating with Members of Congress and stakeholders on its plans to consolidate and relocate facilities, but halting the process at this stage is not the answer.

Instead, what we need is an open, continuous, and defined process, and that is exactly what we have in the reauthorization bill that the Transportation Committee passed just a few weeks ago. It allows affected stakeholders to work together with the FAA to develop criteria and make recommendations that will be submitted to the Congress and published in the Federal Register for proper review and oversight. Any objections or changes made to the recommendations must again be submitted to the Congress. Congress does not relinquish its role, but, instead, can provide thorough review, oversight, and input.

Let me say that preventing consolidation and relocation is not the answer. We just held a hearing this morning, the Aviation Subcommittee, in which we discussed the FAA's aging traffic control facilities. Many of these facilities are 40 years old or older, and they are exceeding their useful life expectancy in not meeting current operational requirements. This has resulted in the GAO's giving many of the facilities a score of fair to poor.

We must ensure that the FAA make the investments needed to maintain the current existing infrastructure, including in some cases consolidation and relocation, to ensure that the current system can continue to operate in a safe and reliable way. I believe the best course of action is to address this issue through the reauthorization bill, and that is exactly what we have done in passing the bill out of committee.

As a result, I oppose this amendment and urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the Hastings amendment.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to point out that the gentleman from Florida has made the point that the House passed last year legislation doing this. That was never acted upon and was not included in the CR, the final CR for the 2007 budget. That was adopted in the House version of the bill, but it was not carried through to the CR. So there is no precedent of merit there.

Secondly, the crux of our problem is that we have a huge growth of air traffic that is expected within a 20-year period. From 1995 to the year 2015, we will have gone from half a billion passengers to a billion passengers, and that is in the commercial traffic, plus all of the increase in general aviation. We cannot sit with our head in the sand and not modernize all these facilities, the towers, the facilities, the equipment, the control systems that are necessary to deal with that increase in traffic, and that has to be done. It has already been done in some of our major parts of the country.

The gentleman from Texas has concerns about Texas. The authorizing language which the T&I Committee has reported out includes a system to look at those cases to review and to set up a system for reviewing how those systems will be set up in additional places as the consolidation of TRACONs and the modernization of these facilities and the reequipment of these facilities must go forward.

So I think that that part of it is a red herring, truly. In the case of Chicago and New York and Philadelphia and Washington and California, our heaviest traffic locations in the country, and Atlanta besides, we already have these consolidations in place. And in the case of California, 40-some-odd airports and their tower facilities have been included now in 2 TRACONs where there used to be 8 or more TRACONs in the State of California.

So the number of TRACONs is going to come down. It must come down, and we must get on with this modernization of the facilities and equipment that otherwise would always be very costly. It must be done.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OLVER. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Florida, though I don't think I have much time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Just to say, Mr. Chairman, you know there is another component to all of this, and that is that the 16,000 air traffic controllers and the people that work in these modern facilities are overburdened, and I just for the life of me do not understand how we don't understand the dynamics of their work.

And I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. OLVER. They will be much less burdened if they have new facilities and new equipment, equipment that is modern and that can manage to handle that traffic in a much more efficient manner.

I hope that the amendment will not be adopted.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the "noes" appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. FRELINGHUYSEN

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used by the Federal Aviation Administration to implement its preferred alternative of the New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia Airspace Redesign project.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to offer this amendment on my own behalf as well as Congressman GARRETT from New Jersey, my colleague; and Congressman CHRISTOPHER SHAYS from Connecticut.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to my colleague from New Jersey, SCOTT GARRETT.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am pleased to come to the floor today with my colleague from New Jersey, Morristown, and also my other colleague here as well from Connecticut, CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, as we propose an amendment that will ask the FAA to basically more closely consider how their proposed airspace redesign plan will impact upon the quality of life of the residents of the State of New Jersey, from Connecticut, and also from the State of New York as well.

Now, we all recognize that the skies over our area are more crowded than ever before, and air travel is, obviously, a worthy goal. But the FAA must make noise and air pollution a top consideration whenever they work to redesign their airspace.